

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 203735

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR
SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. PORTUGAL: INDONESIA TO INTERVENE IN TIMOR?

A LISBON FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL HAS INFORMED EMBASSY LISBON THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS "ON THE VERGE" OF INVITING INDONESIAN AND AUSTRALIAN INTERVENTION IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR LATER TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE INVITATION HAS ALREADY BEEN DELIVERED TO THE AUSTRALIAN AND INDONESIAN EMBASSIES, AND INDICATED:

--AUSTRALIA HAS DECLINED TO INTERVENE.

--INDONESIA WILL PROBABLY "JUMP AT THE CHANCE TO MOVE IN." IT ALREADY HAS SEVERAL DESTROYERS EN ROUTE TO DILI WITH ORDERS TO FIGHT IF ATTACKED.

THE PORTUGUESE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THEIR DESPERATE DECISION TO REQUEST FOREIGN INTERVENTION MAY HAVE THE FOLLOWING CONSEQUENCES:
SECRET

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QUENCES:

--THE REBELS (FRETILIN) WILL MASSACRE THEIR PORTUGUESE AND AUSTRALIAN HOSTAGES, THEN MOVE ON THE REMAINING

PORTUGUESE ENCLAVE IN DILI.

--INDONESIA WILL RETALIATE WITH A SLAUGHTER OF FRETELIN PARTISANS.

FBIS REPORTS THAT THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNOR AND ALL EUROPEANS WERE EVACUATED ON AUGUST 26. (SECRET) LISBON 4924, 8/26.)

2. ARGENTINA: PERONISTS IN DISARRAY

A PERONIST PARTY CONGRESS AUGUST 23, RATHER THAN HEALING SPLITS, WIDENED THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO PRINCIPAL FACTIONS AND FURTHER DAMAGED MRS. PERON'S PRESTIGE AND POSITION:

--ONE FACTION, OUTRAGED AT MRS. PERON'S PACKING OF THE NEW PARTY LEADERSHIP WITH HER OWN PERSONAL FOLLOWERS, WALKED OUT OF THE MEETING.

--THE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE PARTY ARE NOW SO DEEP THAT OPPONENTS MAY DEMAND THAT MRS. PERON'S LEADERSHIP SLATE BE OUSTED AND A NEW CONGRESS CONVENED.

WHETHER OR NOT THE NEW LEADERSHIP IS OFFICIALLY REPUDIATED, IT IS THOROUGHLY COMPROMISED IN A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE PERONIST PARTY AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RESTORE ORDER IN MRS. PERON'S MAIN POLITICAL BASE. (CONFIDENTIAL) BUENOS AIRES 5692, 8/25.)

3. ANGOLA: MPLA'S POSITION GROWS STRONGER

CONSUL GENERAL KILLORAN REPORTS THAT THE MPLA, WITH GREATER MANPOWER, AMPLE SOVIET ARMS AND BETTER LEADERSHIP, HAS HELD ITS OWN AGAINST THE FNLA, AND THREATENS TO PREVENT UNITA FROM ESTABLISHING A ZONE OF INFLUENCE. REGARDING OTHER CONTESTANTS:

--THE FNLA, DEPENDENT UPON ZAIRE, AND LACKING LEADER-
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SHIP, IS IN A WEAK POSITION, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN.

--UNITA, TORN BY INTERNAL DISSENSION AT THIS MOST CRUCIAL PERIOD IN ITS EXISTENCE, IS IN NO SHAPE TO FIGHT.

THE PORTUGUESE ARE IN AN IMPOSSIBLE DILEMMA. WITHOUT SUFFICIENT TROOPS OR THE WILL TO FIGHT, THEIR STRATEGY OF PROMOTING A DIALOGUE AMONG THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, TAKING OVER ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND FORCING THE MPLA OUT OF LUANDA HAS NO CHANCE OF SUCCESS. (CONFIDENTIAL) LUANDA 1247, 8/25.)

4. NIGERIAN REGIME DUCKS CIVILIAN RULE ISSUE

EMBASSY LAGOS REPORTS THAT BRIGADIER OBASANJO, WIDELY CONSIDERED TO BE THE NUMBER TWO MAN IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT, STATED AT A WELL PUBLICIZED PRESS CONFERENCE THAT:

--THE NEW LEADERSHIP WILL ADOPT A "LOW PROFILE."

--THE FIRST MAJOR SPEECH BY THE NEW HEAD OF STATE WILL ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE.

EMBASSY COMMENT: OBASANJO'S SIDESTEPPING OF THE ISSUE OF RETURN TO NON-MILITARY RULE IS DUE TO THE NEW REGIME'S RELUCTANCE TO BOX ITSELF IN WITH SPECIFIC DATES. WITH REGARD TO CORRUPTION, IT APPEARS THAT SELECTED EX-OFFICIALS MAY BE THROWN TO THE WOLVES, BUT THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY LEST ONE INVESTIGATION SET OFF A CHAIN REACTION THAT WOULD ENGULF SOME OF ITS OWN MEMBERS. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) LAGOS 8249, 8/26.) INGERSOLL

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